

...that the Ahmadi community will be excluded from upcoming elections in Pakistan?

Historic elections are scheduled to take place in Pakistan in Spring 2013. However, members of the Ahmadi religious community will be prevented from voting for the next civilian government. An executive order requires Ahmadis to register separately and vote as non-Muslims. Chief Executive's Order No. 15, which President Musharraf issued in 2002, mandates a separate electoral system for the Ahmadi religious community. Since Ahmadis consider themselves to be Muslim, the Executive Order discriminates against them on religious lines and disenfranchises them from the democratic process.

With elections on the horizon, an individual has [challenged this discriminatory provision](#) at the Supreme Court. Removing this provision would allow Ahmadis to participate as equal citizens in Pakistan's democratic process and remove one facet of the blatant discrimination under which this community suffers. However, President Zardari could issue a new executive order at anytime.

In addition to this executive order, Ahmadis in Pakistan are subjected to severe legal restrictions and other forms of officially-sanctioned discrimination. Ahmadis are prevented by law from engaging in the full practice of their faith and may face criminal charges for a range of religious practices, including the use of religious terminology. In 1974, the constitution was amended to declare members of the Ahmadi religious community to be "non-Muslims." In 1984, basic acts of Ahmadi worship and interaction were made criminal offenses when sections B and

C of Article 298 were added to the penal code. These amendments criminalized Ahmadis “posing” as Muslims, calling their places of worship “mosques,” worshipping in non-Ahmadi mosques or public prayer rooms, performing the Muslim call to prayer, using the traditional Islamic greeting in public, or displaying the basic affirmations of the Muslim faith. Over the past year, USCIRF has received reports of 10 Ahmadis being charged under Article 298.

Anti-Ahmadi laws have helped to create a permissive climate for vigilante violence against members of this community. USCIRF has received reports of 44 attacks targeting Ahmadis over the past year, with 22 resulting in the death of 23 individuals. In addition to attacks on individual Ahmadis, local police repeatedly have forced Ahmadis to remove Qu’ranic scripture from mosques and minarets. In addition, there have been multiple instances of Ahmadi graves being desecrated, some by the local police.